

The Crafts 99

Chapter 99: A Tie

Sharpness Test: Lucas' Dagger 192, Hozier-class Halberd 182

Hardness Test: Lucas' Dagger 182, Hozier-class Halberd 191

Strength Test: Lucas' Dagger 185, Hozier-class Halberd 192

Durability Test (physical aspect) : Lucas' Dagger 52 seconds, Hozier-class Halberd 45 seconds.

"How come?"

The durability test involved exposing the vestige to varying proportions of pressure and force over time, aiming to figure out the vestige's longevity and resistance to wear, fatigue and environmental factors. Due to this, similar to the other tests, it had more than one phase.

When done in a lab, it was more complicated, but for a vestige duel, the process had been simplified into three phases; the physical, chemical and environmental aspects.

The scores displayed were for the physical aspect of the durability test, which many expected the Hozier-class Halberd to easily win. After all, it performed greatly in the hardness and strength tests, so by logic, it should be much more durable than the dagger. Yet, the results turned many speechless. The dagger has actually lasted longer.

"This should be impossible, right? I mean, the halberd is stronger and harder which implies it's of a better build and material. So logically, it should be more durable." Someone couldn't help but utter.

"What do you know? A vestige's durability isn't only dependent on the material used. Some vestige-smiths can make their vestiges longer-lasting even if they make it with plain plastic." Someone said.

As it turned out, the performance of Lucas' dagger in the vestige duel was so splendid that it had managed to garner some fans. Some of the vestige-smiths were at the lowest rank and compared to a huge company like the one behind the Hozier-class Halberd, they were nothing. It has always been a dream of theirs to top such an entity, but they lacked the talent to do so.

With someone capable of pulling off such a miracle, while some might be envious, it was natural for a few others to support him.

"Indeed. There's a stellar matrix known as Hulmit's Prism. It's a somewhat complicated stellar matrix and quite difficult to inscribe. One would have to be at least a Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith to be able to pull it off. However, it's capable of increasing the durability of a vestige by making some ethereal changes to its internal physical structure.

Because of this, the vestige's hardness and even strength might not exhibit much improvements, but its durability would skyrocket." Another explained.

Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith was the rank for vestige-smiths capable of making Grade 3 vestiges, and it was a very respected rank in Baylands city-state, second only to Tier 1 Master.

The freelancer doubted the score and was about to protest, but he held back the urge. The overseer has already confirmed that the pieces of equipment weren't tampered with. If he protested, not only was his doubting the overseer's judgement, but the freelancer would inadvertently be questioning his victories.

The freelancer's anxiety couldn't be helped, after all, he had wagered one hundred federal coins for this duel.

'It's not over yet. There are still two more phases and even if I lose this, I still have two wins. My halberd should also be able to win the Steller energy categories, so the win is still in the bag.'

The chemical aspects tested a vestige's resistive ability towards toxic chemicals that could be found in certain desolate beasts and regions. Most of these toxins were harmful to the human body, but they could also damage vestiges. As such, a vestige-smith had to consider making their vestige durable against such toxins, hence why this test came to be.

The environmental phase test measured a vestige's resistive ability to various environments, such as cold, hot, increased gravity and so on. This was because each planet had different environmental parameters and in some planets, the regions drastically differed. Take for instance Earth, where the north and south poles were exceedingly colder than the regions along the equator.

Vestiges had to be made considering contrasting environments in mind.

Nonetheless, this didn't mean that the average vestige could be used in all environments, but that they were made to still maintain their form at least for a while and a few short battles; the longer the period was, the better. However, there were still unique vestiges for special regions which differed from the typical vestige.

Despite his hopes, the freelancer actually went on to lose the chemical and environmental aspects. When all three results were collated and formulated into the final durability test rating, Lucas' dagger won by a large margin.

Durability Test : Lucas' Dagger 196, Hozier-class Halberd 184.

"Incredible. This is a score equivalent to some of the top premium model vestiges."

"Indeed. Beyond the 189 mark is left for top class premium models at Grade 2, but above 195 is for the best of the best. This dagger could already compare to them in terms of durability."

"Hey, forget about that. Haven't you guys noticed it yet?" Someone said.

"Noticed what?"

"They're tied." Experience exclusive tales on empire

"!!!"

The statement finally brought the crowd's attention back to reality -the vestige duel. Both sides had two wins each from the four physical tests and were now tied. Even though the majority of the crowd didn't believe Lucas would win, drawing with a premium model vestige while using an unknown vestige model was downright unbelievable and breathtaking.

It was enough to appear on the front page of vestige magazines and freelancer gossip sites.

In fact, some had even begun hoping, praying even, for a miracle to happen.

"It would be remarkable if that dagger can somehow come out on top."

"Heh. Why do you think that?" A supporter of the Hozier-class Halberd scoffed.

"Isn't it obvious?" Someone else replied. "The dagger was able to win the durability test by relying not only on its materials but the matrices inscribed on it. This means that in terms of stellar matrix designs, the vestige-smith is better."

The doubter was stumped and didn't have a reply.

"Delusional." A vestige-smith who wore glasses sneered.

"What did you say?" The man who had replied before snarled.

"I said you're being delusional. So what if he won based on a matrix? It could just mean that he was more knowledgeable about unique stellar matrices. Also, the Hozier-class Halberd is a finished design; adding an extra stellar matrix would be difficult, which would explain why it lacks something like the Hulmit's Prism stellar matrix.

The material used is also firm and of good quality, so there's no need to abandon an existing attack matrix for a durability-boosting. We can see that from its score. The dagger just won simply based on luck, so saying that the result already implies that the vestige-smith of the dagger is better than the veterans of the Ninth Arc Company is absurd and risible."

The nearby vestige-smiths, freelancers and other attendees froze. They thought deeply on the words and realised that he was right. Even the new supporters Lucas had just gained were slowly losing their newfound fervour.

Even after tying after four tests, the odds still weren't in his favour.

"Now that we're more than halfway through, why don't we take a short break?" The overseer suggested.

"No need. Let's round this up quick." The freelancer said.

He was scared that Lucas would try to pull something sneaky during this break, so he wanted to finish things right away.